

Garbage Gazette

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

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Garbage Gazette Creator, Lois Hager, Retires from DEP

It is with great sadness that this editor must report on the retirement of a former, and the first, editor of the Garbage Gazette, the longest running publication of the CT Department of Environmental Protection. Lois began her career at DEP in the Spring of 1982 as a consultant. She was hired to work to promote recycling in the state. At this time resource recovery was being considered as a waste management option and recycling was to be an important component. Lois identified those few towns that had good recycling programs in place and shared this information with other municipalities. It was during this period that the first Intermediate Processing Center was developed by Peter Karter, who is widely known as the “father of the modern MRF”. This IPC was later moved to Groton and became a model for similar facilities throughout the country.

Lois left DEP in 1984, but returned in the Fall of 1986 to manage a \$10 million appropriation from the state legislature to be used as start up funds for local/regional recycling programs. Representative David Anderson from Preston played a major role in securing these funds for recycling. Lois was required to draft a plan to implement recycling on a statewide basis with assistance from the Legislative Municipal Solid Waste Recycling Advisory Committee. The plan laid out a system that would provide recycling services to all of CT’s residents, with cooperative marketing of these materials set up through a system of regional Intermediate Processing Centers. The plan was delivered on time to the legislature in January 1987. The legislature then passed the Mandatory Recycling Act in the 1987 session, making CT the second state in the nation to implement mandatory recycling.

In 1988, Lois joined the DEP as permanent staff and hired the recycling group who would provide the technical expertise to make recycling a daily reality for CT’s 3 million residents. Lois and John Cimochoowski developed the grant guidance to provide over \$40 million in grant funds to implement recycling both at the local and regional levels. By 1991, some of the IPCs were up and running and the rest were under construction.

In 1992, Lois was promoted to Director of the Waste Planning & Standards Division. Her responsibilities still included overseeing the Recycling Program but were expanded to include Cost Recovery, the Manifest Unit and the Office of Pollution Prevention (P2).

Lois looks forward to continuing to work on environmental issues on a less-than full-time basis. Lois will miss everyone at DEP and is grateful for the privilege of having had the opportunity to work with the dedicated professionals both at DEP and the local and regional levels. *We will miss you too Lois!*

First in CT Mercury Thermometer Exchange Held

A mercury thermometer exchange held on April 29, 2000, as part of a Hartford Neighborhood Earth Day celebration was a huge success and collected 35 pounds of mercury. Ten pounds of mercury in 740 thermometers were collected. In addition, 25 pounds of elemental mercury were collected from residents who participated in the exchange. The exchange was part of a supplemental environmental project being completed by Hartford Hospital under an enforcement agreement with the DEP.

By surveying the participants in the exchange, we learned that they traveled from 38 different towns in CT and 3 from out of state. The non-mercury replacement

thermometers that were distributed included 750 digital thermometers, 300 adhesive infant thermometers and 600 personal thermometers (which are similar to a credit card and contain a reusable thermometer).

Approximately 92% of the digital units were issued on a 1 to 1 swap. The remaining 8% were issued with no surrender of a mercury thermometer. Several of the participants reported conducting their own collection in their extended families, housing complex, or workplace in preparation for the event. They typically exchanged 3-8 units on behalf of these other individuals. One participant collected 25 mercury thermometers in her workplace and several mercury containing thermostats and gauges in her community. Although we lost count (we had written tick marks on our paper and stopped at 325) we believe that over 500 individuals attended the exchange. If you would like more information on thermometer exchanges, please contact Kim Trella at 860-424-3297.

Pay-As-You-Throw Implementation Assistance Available

Pay-as-You-Throw (PAYT) programs (in which households are charged for waste collection based on the amount of waste they throw away - **in the same way that they are charged for electricity, gas, and other utilities**), have been implemented in thousands of communities nationwide. In order to make it easier for Connecticut municipalities to implement such programs, DEP:

- 1.) has released an RFP to contract with a PAYT specialist who will work with those Connecticut towns and cities expressing interest in implementing PAYT programs. Such help will take the form of:
 - * a workshop this fall during which municipal attendees, with the guidance of the PAYT specialist, will custom design a PAYT program for their town and will draft a plan for promoting its adoption by their town.
 - * “individual town support” (for those municipalities seeking such assistance) – i.e. help promoting PAYT to other town officials and town residents (such support can include attendance and support at town meetings by the PAYT specialist, etc.)
- 2.) DEP will also be making grants available to municipalities for PAYT education and for PAYT seed money. Grant guidelines will be developed this summer. Questions about the PAYT RFP can be addressed to Judy Belaval (860) 424-3237 or Nan Peckham.

CT DEP Announces Competitive Grants for Organics Recycling

The CT DEP Recycling Program is providing grants to municipalities, regional entities representing municipalities and not-for-profit organizations to implement pilot programs to recycle source separated organic materials from the commercial and institutional sectors of the state. A total of \$250,000 is available to fund several projects. Proposals will be reviewed on a competitive basis and are due by 4:30 p.m. on September 1, 2000. For a copy of the RFP, contact K.C. Alexander at (860) 424-3365.

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